

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network: More than a decade after passage of federal health care law, state still stands in the way of Wisconsinites' access to affordable health coverage

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Madison, Wis. - March 23, 2022 – Today marks 12 years since the historic passage of the Affordable Care Act, and yet roughly 91,000 Wisconsinites remain uninsured or unable to afford care, the Wisconsin legislature has continually refused to increase access to BadgerCare, the state's Medicaid program.

Wisconsin is one of only 12 states that has not increased access to health insurance coverage through their Medicaid programs despite overwhelming evidence that doing so would improve health outcomes, reduce health disparities and benefit the state's economy.

"Everyone deserves a fair and equitable chance to fight cancer, manage chronic illnesses and maintain their health. Medicaid makes that possible – but by denying Medicaid coverage to tens of thousands state residents, lawmakers are denying them this basic human right," said Sara Sahli, government relations director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) in Wisconsin.

"BadgerCare strengthens our economy, promotes growth and creates jobs. When the workforce is healthy, productivity and innovation increase, and individuals are better equipped to work and better support their families."

Recent research from the American Cancer Society has found in states that have expanded access to Medicaid coverage, [early-stage diagnoses increased](#), particularly among rural and Black patients; Medicaid expansion was associated with a [greater increase in one-year overall survival](#) rates, especially in the poorest areas of states; and higher Medicaid income eligibility limits were associated with [better long-term survival](#), consistent across a variety of cancers and for patients with both early and late stage diagnosis.

“The benefits of extending eligibility limits for low-income individuals through Medicaid are clear and it’s time lawmakers take this long-overdue step to close the coverage and affordability gap. No one should suffer a day without the health care coverage they need and deserve,” said Sahli.

ACS CAN will continue working with state lawmakers to increase access to Medicaid until the job is done. This year alone, 37,320 Wisconsinites will hear the words ‘you have cancer.’ Those who are uninsured can’t wait any longer for coverage.